Theft of Gold of MMTC

1197. DR. BALIRAM : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether thirty kilogram of gold valued at rupees one hundred and twenty five crore is missing from the coffers of the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India Ltd. during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action being taken by the Government against the persons involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b). Against a quantity of 36487 kgs. of gold released for Export of gold jewellery by MMTC from 1993-94 to 1995-96, MMTC has reported a default of 172 kgs. of gold valued at Rs. 6.88 crore as outstanding against a few exporters in exporting gold jewellery under gold loan schemes operated by them.

(c) The Government have constituted an Inter-Ministerial Group under the Chairmanship of Commissioner (Customs) Delhi, to take coordinated action against defaulting exporters of gold jewellery. Action has been pursued by MMTC in all cases of default in association with Director General of Foreign Trade, Customs Department, Directorate of Enforcement, Revenue Intelligence and Central Bureau of Investigation. Action has also been initiated by MMTC to ascertain negligence, if any, on part of MMTC officials.

[English]

Export of Rice

1198. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the export of Indian rice have come to standstill recently due to availability of cheaper rice in other countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to boost the export of rice and to compete with the International Market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Steps taken to enhance exports of rice include removal of Minimum Export Price and Quantity restrictions, permitting Food Corporation of India to export/sell for export 5 lakhs metric tonnes of fine and superfine rice from the Central Pool during 1996-97, provision of concessional credit, product development to meet international needs, assistance to exporters for improved packaging, strengthening of quality control, promoting export of identified products through brand promotion campaigns, arranging buyers-seller meets and participation in international fairs/ exhibitions.

[Translation]

Heavy Engineering Corporation Ltd.

1199. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether casual labourers working for the last twenty years in Heavy Engineering Corporation Ltd. have not been made regular so far;

(b) if so, reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the present number of casual labourers working therein alongwith the number of those who have been working regularly for the last five or more years in this company?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b). Heavy Engineering Corporation Limited has reported that as per their available records there is no instance of a casual labour being deployed continuously in the Corporation for the last twenty years.

(c) Nil.

Synthetic bag manufacturing Industry

1200. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether synthetic bag manufacturing industry is on the verge of closure;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to encourage the use of synthetic bags so as to protect the interests of the persons involved therein?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Does not arise in view of (a) above.

[English]

Voluntary Retirement Scheme

1201. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA :
SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to make Voluntary Retirement Scheme more attractive and for enhancement of ex-gratia payment in Public Sector Undertakings; and